

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated November 28, 2011. Claims 1, 4 to 7, 10 to 13 and 16 to 19 are in the application, of which Claims 1, 7 and 13 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 18 to 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 for allegedly being directed to non-statutory subject matter. In particular, the Office Action alleges that the apparatus of Claim 1 can be directed to software per se. Without conceding the correctness of this rejection and solely in an effort to expedite prosecution, Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the code converting units include at least one of a hardware implemented code converting unit and a non-transitory computer readable medium. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 7, 13 and 18 to 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent 5,943,508 (Penney) in view of Applicant Admitted Prior Art (AAPA). Claims 4, 10 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Penney, AAPA and U.S. Patent 6,587,735 (Yaguchi). Claims 5 to 6, 11 to 12 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Penney, AAPA, Yaguchi and U.S. Publication No. 2004/0047666 (Mitchell). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Independent Claims 1, 7 and 13 generally concern an image processing apparatus including a predetermined number of code converting units. The code converting units include reserved converting units and non-reserved converting units. A processing request is issued from a request-source task unit of a plurality of request-source task units. The request-source task units have priorities corresponding to respective tasks.

According to one aspect of Claims 1, 7 and 13, each request-source task unit having a high priority fixedly reserves one of the reserved code converting units.

By virtue of this arrangement, it is ordinarily possible to ensure that a code-converting unit can be assigned, at any time, to a high-priority request-source task unit.

Referring specifically to claim language, independent Claim 1 is directed to an image processing apparatus. The apparatus includes a predetermined number of code converting units, the predetermined number of code converting units including at least one of a hardware implemented code converting unit and a non transitory computer readable medium, each code converting unit configured to execute coding and decoding of image data. The predetermined number of code converting units includes reserved code converting units and non-reserved code converting units, such that the number of reserved code converting units is less than the number of all code converting units. Additionally, the apparatus includes a plurality of request-source task units, each request-source task unit configured to issue a processing request, the number of request-source task units being greater than the predetermined number of code converting units and having priorities set in advance. Each request-source task unit having a high priority fixedly reserves one of the reserved code converting units, and each request-source task unit having a low priority competes for at least one of a plurality of the non-reserved code converting units, the number of non-reserved code converting units being less than the number of request-source task units having the low priority. An assigning unit is configured to assign: i. when the processing request is received from one of the plurality of request-source units having the high priority, the reserved code converting unit to a task corresponding to the request-source task unit that issued the processing request, and ii. when the processing request is received from one of the plurality of request-source units having the low priority and one

of the plurality of non-reserved code converting units is an idle code converting unit, the idle code converting unit to the task corresponding to the request-source task unit that issued the processing request.

Independent Claims 7 and 13 are directed to a method and a computer-readable medium, respectively, substantially in accordance with the apparatus of Claim 1.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or suggest the features of Claims 1, 7 and 13, and in particular is not seen to disclose or suggest at least the feature of fixedly reserving one of a plurality of reserved code converting units by each request-source task unit having a high priority.

As understood by Applicants, Penney is directed to a switcher using shared processors. The switcher has an input matrix to which a corresponding number of inputs may be coupled. A pool of processors is coupled to the outputs of the input matrix as needed for processing those sources which require processing. See Penney, Abstract.

Page 4 of the Office Action asserts that Penney (Column 2, lines 47 to 53) discloses each request-source task unit having a high priority reserving one of the reserved-code converting units.

In this regard, the cited portions of Penney simply disclose that outputs of the input matrix may be assigned to one of the input sources, and that a resource manager assures that a compression decoder is coupled to an output to decompress data. See Penney, Column 2, lines 47 to 53.

Nevertheless, Penney is not seen to fixedly assign a processor to any input source, as Penney merely assigns all processors in the order in which requests are received. See Penney, Column 2, lines 32 to 37. Thus, as seen by Applicants, once Penney assigns

all processors and no other processors are available for a high priority task, the high priority task must wait until one of the processors becomes idle.

Accordingly, Penney is not seen to disclose or suggest fixedly reserving a code converting unit for a high-priority task unit, much less fixedly reserving one of a plurality of reserved code converting units by each request-source task unit having a high priority.

AAPA, Yaguchi and Mitchell have been reviewed and are not seen to remedy the deficiencies of Penney.

Therefore, independent Claims 1, 7 and 13 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are believed to be allowable for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the claims, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised, it is believed the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

No claim fees are believed due. However, should it be determined that additional claim fees are required under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 or 1.17, the Director is hereby authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account 06-1205.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

/Michael J. Guzniczak/  
Michael J. Guzniczak  
Attorney for Applicants  
Registration No. 59,820

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO  
1290 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, New York 10104-3800  
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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